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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000499

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKS SEEK PROCEDURE FOR EMERGENCY HELO FLIGHTS
INTO NORTHERN IRAQ

Classified By: CDA Robert S. Deutsch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) Summary: TGS has requested permission to fly Turkish military helicopters into northern Iraq in case of an emergency and also for rotating personnel in and out of the area. We understand such permission would require the overall permission of the IIG, though MNF-I would implement the necessary procedures. We have advised TGS to approach the Iraqis. End summary.

2. (S) On Jan. 6, TGS/J3 LTG Yalcin requested via a letter to ODC-Turkey permission for Turkish military helicopters to fly into northern Iraq on an urgent basis to evacuate Turkish personnel in case of emergency. Yalcin also asked that Turkey be permitted to use the helos for personnel rotations. TGS requested that Turkey and the U.S. establish a mechanism whereby the U.S. LNO with Turkish Special Forces in Silopi (the border town in Turkey where the helicopters are based) would expedite MNF-I clearance for such flights on an as-needed basis. We believe the basis for this request was the Dec. 17 murder by AIF of five Turkish police officers who were driving through Mosul on their way to Baghdad to provide security for the Turkish embassy there. In addition, Turkey has Special Forces units in northern Iraq (ostensibly keeping an eye on PKK/Konra-Gel activity) as well as LNOs with MNF-I in Talafar, Kirkuk, Mosul, and Baghdad.

3. (S) MNF-I in Baghdad has advised ODC-Turkey that MNF-I does not have the authority to approve flights into Iraqi airspace; this rests with the IIG. Should the IIG approve the Turkish request, MNF-I would then develop the necessary procedures to implement it. ODC-Turkey Chief MG Sutton passed this information to LTG Yalcin in a letter dated Jan. 26. Text of Yalcin's and MG Sutton's letters in paras. 5 and 6.

4. (S) LTG Yalcin and TGS/J3 MG Unal raised this request with the DCM and PolMilCouns January 26. Since Yalcin had not yet seen MG Sutton's response, PolMilCouns explained it would require Turkey gaining the IIG's approval before engaging us on the modalities. Yalcin initially misunderstood, arguing that getting approval from the IIG for each flight would take more time than available in emergency situations. He envisaged a system where the U.S. LNO to the Turkish special forces headquarters in Silopi would receive some short notice (e.g., 10 minutes) advance notice of an emergency flight. He would then coordinate with the appropriate U.S. authorities in northern Iraq to facilitate the flight. This mechanism would only be used in extremis, when personnel needed to be extracted due to extreme security situation or medical emergency. Since it was the U.S., not the IIG, that had the capability to implement such an agreement, he thought trying to reach an agreement with the Iraqis would be a waste of time. The DCM explained that what our military was suggesting in its reply was not a potentially time consuming flight-by-flight approval by the IIG, but as the sovereign entity, the IIG must agree to the concept, MNF-I and TGS could then agree on the modalities and implement them when needed.

5. (S) BEGIN TEXT OF TGS LETTER TO ODC-TURKEY (NOTE, INTERNAL PARAGRAPH NUMBERING):

HRK.: 1700-12-03/Pl.Hrk.D.MMHS.(Dz.)15/3134591
6 Jan 2005

SUBJECT: Request for Helicopter Flight

OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION TURKEY

1. As known, various Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) elements are conducting mission within the US Headquarters in Tel Afer, Kirkuk, and Mosul and in some regions in the North of Iraq. Additionally, there are many Turkish citizens in Iraq within the relation of commerce and economy.

2. Due to the below stated security reasons Turkish helicopters are required to use Iraq airspace:

a. Provide transportation (personnel exchange) and logistical support for the TAF elements stationed in the north of Iraq.

b. Provide support during emergencies (Incident on 17 Dec 2004; a Turkish Police Team attacked in Mosul).

13. If the subject helicopter is needed to be used, the US authorities will be notified by the US liaison officer in Silopi and Turkish Liaison Officers in Baghdad ASAP. Additionally, TGS will notify the Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey on time.

14. If our request is approved in principal (sic), it will be beneficial for the Turkish and US experts conduct a study in order to define the details of the subject implementation.

15. Your action to inform us on your opinion ASAP is appreciated.

FOR THE CHIEF TGS
Metin Yavuz YALCIN
LTG
Chief Operations

END TEXT

16. (S) BEGIN TEXT OF ODC-TURKEY RESPONSE (NOTE, INTERNAL PARAGRAPH NUMBERING):

January 26, 2005

TCH

SUBJECT: (U) Request for Helicopter Flight

Lieutenant General Metin Yavuz Yalcin
Chief, Operations
Turkish General Staff
Ankara

Dear General Yalcin:

Reference: TGS/J-3, HRK.:
1700-13-05/Pl.Hrk.D.MMHS.(DZ.)16/3134592, 06 January 2005

1. (S-REL TU) I received the referenced letter requesting permission to use Turkish Helicopters in Iraqi airspace under emergency conditions. Your request was forwarded to Multi National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and is being staffed. MNF-I informs us that they do not have the authority to grant permission for the use of Iraqi airspace and they therefore recommend that the Government of Turkey submit this request to the Government of Iraq via formal channels.

2. (S-REL TU) We request that you inform the Office of Defense Cooperation, Turkey once an agreement is reached between the Turkish and Iraqi governments. In the interim, MNF-I will develop the necessary procedures required to process Turkish military non-combat helicopter requests.

3. (U) If there are questions, please contact my Chief, Operations Division, Lieutenant Colonel Allan Elza at PTT 417-1801.

Very Respectfully,
Peter U. Sutton
Major General, U.S. Air Force
Chief

END TEXT

17. (U) Baghdad and REOs minimize considered.
DEUTSCH